

FROM FREDERICK THE GREAT TO HITLER: THE CONSISTENCY OF GERMAN AIMS ¹

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I CANNOT remember a moment when it was more important that we in Great Britain should make an effort to grasp the nature and the meaning of German aims. I say "make an effort"; for without an effort to see things from a German standpoint, to understand German concepts and even German words, we shall not succeed. I myself have been engaged upon the task for some thirty-six years. But it is only recently that the full meaning of German claims and aims, and a sense of their historical and philosophical continuity, have been borne in upon me. How this came about I will briefly relate.

In 1892 and 1893 I studied philosophy at the University of Berlin. This study, and some observation of German political tendencies at that time, inclined me to take a favourable view of German ways of life and thought—with the exception of the political thought of Heinrich von Treitschke, the eloquent German historian whose public lectures I attended. Then, after some three years spent in the study of history, including German history, at Paris University, I returned to Berlin in the spring of 1896 as the acting correspondent of *The Times*. It was a troubled year. At the end of 1895 the German Emperor had sent his famous telegram to President Kruger of the Transvaal on the occasion of the Jameson Raid, and German oversea ambitions were being somewhat truculently expressed in an anti-British tone.

Thus for the first time I came into contact with what were afterwards called pan-German aims. This experience failed to shake my liking for Germany and the Germans. I felt there were at least two sorts of Germans—the kindly intellectual folk of Germany I had known before, and the aggressive adepts of pan-Germanism with its hard core of Prussianism—and I was not yet certain that the latter truly represented the German

¹ Address given at Chatham House on May 10th, 1938, with Mr. G. M. Gathorne-Hardy, M.C., in the Chair.

people. So in Rome, where I lived and worked from the beginning of 1899 until nearly the end of 1902, and afterwards in Vienna up to the spring of 1905, when the German Emperor paid his spectacular visit to Tangier, my personal relations with Germans of all kinds, and my views of German policy, were by no means unsympathetic.

Among my more intimate friends was Herr von Jagow (afterwards Foreign Secretary of Germany at the outbreak of the Great War), who was then a secretary of the German Embassy in Rome. In 1901 he helped, inadvertently, to open my eyes. In an outburst of anger he denounced a book which a Frenchman, M. André Chéradame, had just published entitled *L'Europe et la question d'Autriche au seuil du vingtième siècle*. I got the book and read it. It was a reasoned analysis of pan-German policy in the light of German documents and statements, and of maps contained in pan-German publications. Among those maps was one printed in a pamphlet entitled *Grossdeutschland* (Great Germany) in 1899, with a red line marking the boundaries of Great Germany and Central Europe as they would be round about the year 1950. Alsace and Lorraine, then annexed to Germany, were naturally included within the line. Less natural, it seemed to me, was the inclusion of Dunkirk, Flemish Belgium, the Netherlands, Southern Denmark, German Switzerland, North-Eastern Italy with Trieste and Istria, Hungary, Slovakia, Bohemia, a larger part of Poland than Germany then held, and a portion of Lithuania with Memel.

After I had read the book I began to understand Herr von Jagow's annoyance, but I was far from understanding how deeply the pan-German aims which the map foreshadowed were embedded in German political and philosophical thought.

I ought to have understood it because I had seen, soon after its publication in 1899, Houston Stewart Chamberlain's work, *The Foundations of the Nineteenth Century*. In Vienna, from 1903 onwards, I noticed the influence of this work upon the Germans of Austria, though its strong anti-Catholic tendency estranged many of them. The Austrian pan-Germans took it, however, as their Bible. They came, partly for this reason, into conflict with the Christian Social Anti-Semitic Party of Dr. Lueger, the famous Burgomaster of Vienna. Readers of Herr Hitler's *Mein Kampf* will be familiar with his account of the atmosphere then prevailing in Austria and with his comparison of the rival claims of Austrian pan-Germanism and of Lueger's Christian Social anti-Semitism. I breathed that atmosphere for several

years. The memory of it enabled me to read Hitler's book with more insight than I should otherwise have had; and after Hitler had come into power in Germany the same memory led me back to Houston Stewart Chamberlain's *Foundations*, to his predecessor, Gobineau, and to a number of the earlier pan-German philosophers and writers whose works I had not before studied.

One result of this reading was a series of lectures at King's College in the autumn of 1933 upon the origins of Hitlerism. When these had been published, a young German in London asked me if I had ever seen the correspondence between the Emperor William II and Houston Stewart Chamberlain during the years 1901 to 1923. I had not; and he kindly sent me the volume containing it. I read it with an amazement due to ignorance, for I did not realise that Houston Stewart Chamberlain was reproducing almost textually in his letters to the Emperor the arguments of the German philosopher, Fichte, in the famous fourteen "Speeches to the German Nation"¹ which were delivered in 1808. During my student days in Berlin I had read those speeches and had failed to grasp their significance. Having re-read them and refreshed my knowledge of the political philosophy of Fichte's successor, Hegel, I began to see more clearly the consistency of German thought and the persistence of German political aims with the disciplined power of Prussia and the Prussian State behind them.

A comprehensive review of present German aims and of their inspiration would have to begin with Charlemagne. For practical purposes it may, however, begin with the ascendancy of Prussia under Frederick the Great. He was not the founder of the Prussian State, though in some ways he was its chief architect. The territory of Prussia, originally inhabited by Slavs and by tribes of Lithuanian stock, was first conquered by the Teutonic Order of German Knights in the thirteenth century, and long remained a fief of the Order. In the fourteenth century the Order was a school of Northern chivalry to which men came from all over Europe to win their spurs by helping to extend Christendom against the heathen Lithuanians. King John of Bohemia fought for the Order on the Vistula before being killed and yielding up his ostrich feathers to Edward the Black Prince at Crécy. Henry of Bolingbroke was also a Knight of the Order; and Chaucer's "Perfect Knight" had travelled in "Pruce and Lettowe," that is to say, in Prussia and Livonia.

But in the fifteenth century ruin fell upon the Order. A

¹ *Reden an die deutsche Nation.*

Slav reaction against it dealt it heavy blows; and the teaching of John Wyclif in England had fired John Hus of Bohemia with reforming zeal. Both before and after the martyrdom of Hus in 1415 the Hussite movement became an expression of Czech nationality. The Hussite movement coincided with the loss of German supremacy in Prussia, a loss which the raids of the Hussite forces from Bohemia as far north as the mouth of the Elbe did something to hasten. German students made their exodus from the Bohemian capital of Prague a year before the Slavs of the north-east, led by the Poles and helped by the Lithuanians, crushed the Teutonic Order at the battle of Tannenberg in 1410.

By 1440 a Prussian League was formed among the native nobles and towns to defend their rights against the Teutonic Order. In 1454 an embassy from the Prussian League offered Prussia to the King of Poland; and twelve years later the Order itself became a vassal of Poland. But presently the German Master of the Teutonic Order—as distinguished from its Grand Master—broke away; and even the Teutonic Knights of East Prussia, who remained vassals of Poland under the Grand Master, chose German Princes to be Grand Masters of the Order and ended by selecting Albert Hohenzollern of Brandenburg in 1511.

By this time Luther's Reformation had established itself in Saxony, whence it spread to Prussia. Under the influence of Luther, Albert of Hohenzollern turned Protestant, secularised his territories and in 1526 transformed them into a somewhat heterogeneous Duchy. Like other German Princes, he "received" Roman Law in place of German Common Law and of the more humane Canon Law, and made of himself a little pontiff as well as a prince. The deification of the Prussian State—for which Hegel was afterwards to find pseudo-philosophic warrant—had begun.

But it was not until after the Peace of Westphalia of 1648 had closed the era of devastation known as the Thirty Years' War that Prussia could make her weight felt. In 1611 the Hohenzollern Duchy of Prussia fell by inheritance to a ruler of Brandenburg who belonged to the College of Electors which chose the Holy Roman Emperors of Germany, and was therefore known as the Elector of Brandenburg. Frederick William of Brandenburg, the "Great Elector," proved himself a remarkable man. He declared his independence of Poland, defeated the Swedes in 1675, and, out of an unpromising and divided inheritance, fashioned the embryo of a modern State. He made

Prussia by giving her an army, a navy, a civil service, a postal system and a graduated income tax. His son, Frederick I, father of Frederick the Great, discarded the title of Elector and, with the assent of the Emperor, crowned himself King in the Cathedral of Königsberg. He gave cohesion to his mongrel people, among whom the Great Elector had encouraged all kinds of foreigners to settle, including a large number of industrious and intelligent Huguenots whom the revocation of the Edict of Nantes compelled to leave France after 1685.

He kept up a large, well-trained army, a centralised administration, good popular schools and a full treasury. He had the mind of a drill-sergeant, the manners of a boor and the moods of a savage. He filled his army with giants by the methods of a slave-raider. His violent temper, tinged with insanity, wrecked the happiness of his domestic life; and having quarrelled with his son, afterwards Frederick the Great, he condemned him to witness, as one of many penalties, the beheading of a cherished friend.

The tradition thus established has never been lost in Prussia—the tradition of making Berlin a martial capital, with industries subservient to military needs, and with a doctrine (presently to be immortalised by the East Prussian philosopher, Immanuel Kant, as the “Categorical Imperative”) of duty for duty’s sake in the service of the Prussian State.

When Frederick II succeeded his father in 1740, he soon showed his quality. Contesting the claims of the Austrian Empress, Maria Theresa, to the province of Silesia, he invaded and took Silesia before she could act. (Hitler could not have done better.) In this way he thrust a wedge into the Austrian dominions, and presently fought the Seven Years’ War in order to keep what he had taken. In 1772 he induced Maria Theresa and Catherine of Russia to join him in partitioning Poland, an iniquitous operation by which he gained the Polish region known as West Prussia, and staked out his claims to further expansion. Under him, the final struggle between Prussia and Austria for mastery in Central Europe was foreshadowed.

Readers of Carlyle’s *Frederick the Great* will be familiar with all that can be said in favour of him. Carlyle’s work, with its merits and demerits, is a monumental piece of pro-Prussian propaganda. The more interesting is it, therefore, to read a first-hand English account of Frederick the Great in the form of a letter, dated Berlin, March 18th, 1776, to the Earl of Suffolk from Mr. James Harris, afterwards the first Earl of Malmesbury.

It is published in the first volume of his *Diaries and Correspondence*, and I am indebted to Dr. Delisle Burns for having reminded me of its existence. It runs :—

“ The basis of his Prussian Majesty’s conduct, from the time he mounted the throne to this day, seems to have been the considering of mankind in general, and particularly those over whom he was destined to reign, as beings created merely to be subservient to his will, and conducive to the carrying into execution whatever might tend to augment his power and extend his dominions. Proceeding on these grounds, he has all along been guided by his own judgement alone, without ever consulting any of his Ministers or Superior Officers; not so much from the low opinion he entertains of their abilities, as from a conviction from his own feelings that if he employed them otherwise than as simple instruments they would, in time, assume a will of their own; and instead of remaining accessories endeavour to become principals. To persevere in this system it was necessary for him to divest himself of compassion and remorse, and of course of religion and morality. In the room of the first he has substituted superstition; in the place of the latter what is called in France *sentiment*, and from hence we may, in some measure, account for that motley composition of barbarity and humanity which so strongly marks his character. . . . Thus never losing sight of his object he lays aside all feelings the moment that is concerned; and, although as an individual he often appears and really is humane, benevolent and friendly, yet the instant he acts in his Royal capacity these attributes forsake him and he carries with him desolation, misery, and persecution wherever he goes. . . . If he has failed in small points, resolution and cunning, employed as the occasion required, and always supported by great abilities, have carried him with success through almost every important undertaking he has attempted. . . . He undoubtedly owes this, in great measure, to his superior talents; yet I think we may find another cause in the character and position of his subjects; in general they are poor, vain, ignorant and destitute of principle; had they been rich, his nobility could never have been brought to serve as subaltern officers with zeal and ardour. Their vanity makes them think they see their own greatness in the greatness of their monarch. Their ignorance stifles in them every notion of liberty and opposition and their want of principle makes them ready instruments to execute any orders they may receive, without considering whether they are founded on equity or not. . . . Having said this much it is perhaps less wonderful than it generally appears that such a sovereign, governing such a people, should have raised to so great a pitch of glory a country which, from its geographical position, its climate and its soil, seems to have been calculated to act a very secondary part amongst the European powers; and it is not very difficult to foresee, on its exchanging masters, that its preponderance will greatly sink; and, as this event is certainly not very distant, I hope I shall not trespass on your Lordship’s time

in turning my thoughts for a moment to the future state of these dominions."

Mr. James Harris wrote this in March 1776. Thirty years later Prussia lay smashed and helpless at the feet of Napoleon. But what he said of the effect of Frederick's influence upon the vanity of Prussians was equally true of Germans outside Prussia. For the first time since the Thirty Years' War, Germans felt that they might again aspire to a commanding place in the world. Even before the Seven Years' War there were signs that they were tiring of incessant imitation of the French and of the civilising influences which, emanating from the England of John Locke, had inspired the movement known as "Encyclopædism" in France and as "New Humanism" in Germany. In any event, Frederick's exploits elated them beyond measure. It is a psychological question of some interest whether the alternation of German minds between depression and elation is entirely due to the impact of circumstances upon them, or whether it connotes some inherent lack of stability. I can think of no other people which has swung so often from what modern jargon calls an "inferiority complex" to a "superiority complex," that is to say, from subservient self-depreciation to arrogance and self-assurance.

Towards the middle of last century a German writer, Julius Fröbel, asked in an essay upon "German Emigration and its Natural and Historical Significance" ¹ whether there were any other people which felt so constantly as the Germans the need to affirm its own special character, as though it wanted to convince itself that it really has a special character. He wrote:—

"Where is there another people that uses equivalents for 'German strength,' 'German true-heartedness,' 'German love,' 'German earnestness,' 'German thoroughness,' 'German diligence,' 'German women,' 'German maidens,' or 'German men'? . . . A German demands from himself as something extraordinary that he shall be German, as though he would otherwise be free to get out of his own skin—just as he insists that his men shall be 'manly' and his women 'womanly,' his children 'childlike' and his maidens 'maidenly.' The German spirit is always, so to speak, standing before the mirror and looking at itself. And when it has seen itself a hundred times and has convinced itself of its perfections, a hidden doubt in which dwells the innermost secret of vanity drives it again to stand before the mirror."

With Julius Fröbel's analysis it is interesting to compare Nietzsche's account of the Germans in his work, *Jenseits von*

¹ *Die deutsche Auswanderung und ihre kulturhistorische Bedeutung* (1858).

Gut und Böse (Beyond Good and Evil), which appeared in 1885 :—

“ As a people of the most monstrous mixture and mingling together of races, perhaps even with a preponderance of pre-Aryan elements, as a middle-people in every respect, the Germans are more comprehensive, more elusive, fuller of contradictions, less known, more incalculable, more surprising and more terrifying to themselves than other peoples are; they defy definition and, if only for this reason, they are the despair of the French. It is characteristic of the Germans that among them the question : ‘ What is German ? ’ is never settled.”

With Nietzsche, in his turn, we may compare no less an authority than Adolf Hitler, who, on pages 437–438 of his book *Mein Kampf*, says :—

“ The German people lack that infallible herd-instinct which comes from unity of blood and, especially in moments of danger, saves nations from destruction in so far as it enables them to rise above petty inner differences and to show the firm front of a united herd to a common foe. What we call super-individualism comes from the presence (in our people) of unassimilated heterogeneous race elements side by side with each other. In times of peace this state of things may even be of some service, but, taken as a whole, it cost us the mastery of the world. If, in its historical development, the German people had possessed the same herd-unity that stood other peoples in good stead, the German Empire would to-day be master of the globe. History would have taken another course; and who can say if this course would not have led to what so many purblind pacifists hope to get by whining and whimpering—a peace not supported by the tearful pacifist lamentations of palm-waving females but founded upon the victorious sword of a ruling race bending the world to the service of a higher *Kultur*.”

To the German conception of *Kultur* I shall return. It has little or nothing in common with our conception of “ culture,” though we have taken from it our horrible modern expression “ cultural.” For the sake of continuity we must, however, revert to Frederick the Great and to the history of Prussia. Frederick the Great died in 1786, three years before the outbreak of the French Revolution. His successor, Frederick William II, decided in 1792 to support by arms the cause of Louis XVI of France against the French Revolution and what we should to-day call its “ ideology ” of human freedom and free nationality. This decision plunged Europe into a conflict which cost millions of lives, overthrew the entire political system of the European continent and brought humiliation and suffering upon Germany, a conflict in which the “ Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation ”

came to an end; and after Frederick William III of Prussia had renewed his father's blunder and declared war on Napoleonic France, the Prussian army was crushed at the battle of Jena in October 1806, and its military renown shattered. By the Treaty of Tilsit in July 1807, the King of Prussia was stripped of the best part of his dominions and of more than half his subjects. Once again the Prussians and, with them, the Germans in general were downcast and depressed.

But Napoleon blundered in his turn. The humiliation and the "blood-tax" which he inflicted on Prussia and Germany reacted against him. The Germans who had preened themselves under Frederick II, and were justly proud of their great writers like Schiller and Goethe, Klopstock, Wieland and Herder (to say nothing of supreme musicians like Bach, Mozart and Beethoven), felt it intolerable that, in politics, they should do the bidding of an arrogant foreign master. Indirectly the Germans owed to Napoleon the impulse that found expression in the great Prussian reforms of Stein, Hardenberg and Scharnhorst. Directly they owed him still more. His government in Germany was harsh but salutary. It cleared away much rubbish, spread many useful ideas, and, by sweeping away the Holy Roman Empire and suppressing 120 small States, made Germany less unmanageable and far easier to unite. Especially did it foster a spirit to which the philosopher Fichte was to give full expression in 1808, a year after the Treaty of Tilsit, in his fourteen "Speeches to the German Nation." From these Speeches a direct line runs through German philosophical and political thought during the nineteenth century up to Houston Stewart Chamberlain at the end of that century and to Adolf Hitler in the twentieth.

If Fichte was not the first to give a metaphysical and quasi-religious sanction to German pride of race and yearning for political dominion, he was the first to affirm it comprehensively. He may have caught the idea from earlier philosophers, notably from Herder and Kant, and from an unfinished poem, entitled "German Greatness," which Schiller wrote in 1801. Herder had maintained that the German people alone are initiated into the secrets of philosophical thought and give them real existence by German forms of law and by German national existence. The whole sense of history and of the world, Herder maintained, would be meaningless were they not to lead to the triumph of the German people. Schiller, for his part, declared that the Germans had been despoiled as much by English maritime supremacy as by the deeds of Napoleon. English force and

French brilliance, he declared, are aspects of a materialist outlook, whereas the moral dignity of Germany proceeds from her *Kultur* and from the character of her people, which do not depend upon her political position. Only the German spirit can apprehend sacred things, since it alone communes with the spirit of the Universe which has chosen it to work at the timeless task of human *Kultur*. It must carry forward what the Lutheran Reformation began, and by long endeavour cull for itself alone the fruit of being allied with the truth. When her day has dawned, Germany will reap the harvest of all past centuries. On that day the image of mankind will appear to the world with an integral German visage.

In his fourteen "Speeches" Fichte conceived Germanism as the supreme possession of mankind. Though military force must be its instrument, it would prevail because of its own intrinsic superiority over all other forms of civilisation. This superiority exists independently of the military weapon which ensures its triumph. It is rooted in the eternal order of things.

Saying that he would speak to Germans, and to Germans alone, upon their way of being and thinking, Fichte told them that the essential difference between them and other peoples is reflected above all in their language, and in the fact that this language had been spoken from time immemorial by the same stock on the same primeval soil as an expression of the inmost character of the German folk itself. Unlike other peoples who had learned to speak strange tongues devoid of originality and composed of words without immediate reference to the objects or ideas they were supposed to represent, the German tongue had kept its quality of immediacy, and was therefore living and life-giving. Nay, more; the Germans enjoy the inestimable boon of speaking the living, primeval tongue of the primeval German race which guards and preserves the priceless treasure of its speech. This is the main distinction between Germans and other peoples of Germanic origin. In Fichte's actual words:—

"This distinction arose on the first splitting of the primeval common stock, and consists in the fact that the German speaks a tongue derived from the first outpouring of the vital power of Nature, whereas the other Germanic peoples speak only tongues of which the surface moves while their roots are dead. In this circumstance alone, in vitality and in death, we see the difference. Between life and death there is no comparison, for life has infinite worth. Therefore all comparisons between the German and Latinised languages are worthless, inasmuch as those languages speak of things that are not worth speaking

of. If there be talk of the inner value of the German tongue, let it at least be compared with one of equal rank. It must be measured with a language equally primordial, for instance, ancient Greek."

Summing up his linguistic doctrine, Fichte affirmed that (1) among a people with a living tongue the formation of the mind proceeds from life itself, whereas among people with other tongues, life and the formation of the spirit tread separate paths; (2) for the same reason, a people with a living tongue is truly earnest about the formation of the mind, and wishes it to come from life, whereas with other peoples the formation of the mind is a genial game, nothing more. The latter have wit. The Germans have both wit and soulfulness; (3) among the Germans the whole people is susceptible of formation, and those who do the formative work use the folk, the people itself, as the touchstone of their discoveries; whereas among other nations the educated classes hold aloof from the people and treat the people as blind instruments of their planning.

That is why the Germans were foremost in the shaping of the human race in a new world. Though foreigners had suggested a reform of the Roman Church, the Germans did it. It was through Martin Luther, a German man, who turned to the people and spoke his thoughts to them. They received his words with enthusiasm. This is proof of the special quality of the Germans. By enthusiasm they can be raised to enthusiasm and to exalted clearness of vision. This era was the only one in which the German people, holding the rank which is their due as the primeval human stock, stood forth before the world. Yet their achievements were destroyed by the selfishness of princes until Germany sank low and Europe with her. For when the Germans sink, the rest of Europe sinks with them.

The fundamental character of the Germans as a primeval folk gives them the right to call themselves simply "The People," so that the name "German" can be seen in its true significance. Not otherwise is it in the domain of statecraft. Here, too, the German people are supreme. The determining factor is whether there is something absolutely primordial and original in a people so that it is capable of freedom, of infinite improvement. Such a people is, simply expressed, "German." It is capable of patriotism in the highest sense of the term, of belief in immortality in the form of its own eternal existence as a people, that is to say, the embodiment of the Divine. In this sense people and Fatherland are the bearers and the pledge of eternity, an eternity that goes far beyond the State, in the usual meaning of

the word, because the State itself must limit its work to the choice of the best means of reaching its immediate goal of internal peace. To reach this goal many limitations must be placed upon the natural freedom of individuals. So true patriotism must lie in the conception of the German people as eternal, of the Germans as citizens of their own eternal city, and in stamping this conception deep and indelibly upon all German souls by a new education.

Without political independence even the German language and literature could not save the Germans. They must be free within their own boundaries. These boundaries are, first of all, the inner boundaries, which include all who speak the German tongue. No people of other descent and language can be suffered to dwell within them. A people that has remained true to Nature can, if it finds its own homeland too small, extend it by the conquest of neighbouring territories so as to gain more space, and will drive out the former inhabitants of such territories. It may wish to exchange a rough and barren land for one more blessed; and in this case also it will drive out the earlier inhabitants. Or it can raid neighbouring territories, taking from them everything worth having or bringing back their inhabitants as slaves to be distributed among its own people without allowing the slaves to become elements of its own State. Some people talked, indeed, of a balance of power in Europe as the only means of keeping peace. But how can this empty notion be transformed into a real thing? Only by having in the centre of Europe an overwhelmingly powerful German nation, pure and uncontaminated, animated by a common will and united in a common strength against which the other Europeans would strive in vain.

The thoroughness, earnestness and weight of German thought will, if only Germans grasp them, break through into German life. Let Germans cease to flatter the foreigner. Let them spurn foreign ideas, and foreign words which soil the tongue of truth. Let the thought of generations yet unborn inspire their resolve. Is there in the whole world another people like this primordial German folk? Any man who seeks to answer this question, not merely with enthusiasm but in the light of deep thought, must answer: "No!" If the Germans go down, the whole of mankind goes down without hope of revival.

If Fichte's doctrine sounds to us fantastic, the product of an over-heated imagination in an hour of national disaster, we must remember that it has run through German political thought ever since, and is to be found under various guises in the writings of

Hegel, Goerres and Schlegel, in the operas of Richard Wagner, and particularly in the writings of Friedrich Ratzel and Arthur Dix, the apostles of German "geographical predestination," as well as in Treitschke, Nietzsche, Lamprecht, and a host of minor personages down to the renegade Englishman, Houston Stewart Chamberlain. With Chamberlain's anti-Semitic "Nordic Evangel," as preached in his *Foundations of the Nineteenth Century*, I must presume that you are familiar. He, after Gobineau, popularised the "Aryan" myth. But you are probably less familiar with the letters which Chamberlain wrote to the Emperor William II between 1901 and 1923. I will claim your attention for one of them, which was written in November 1901, after Chamberlain had met the German Emperor at Liebenberg in East Prussia and again at the new Palace at Potsdam. There Chamberlain asked leave to express his thanks in writing to the Emperor—and did so to the tune of nine and a half closely-printed pages. Here is an extract from his epistle :—

"Your Majesty and your subjects have been born in a holy shrine. Most of them do not dream that this is so, just as one does not notice what happens daily, like the rays of the life-giving sun. But I had to tread a long and weary way before I could even see the shrine from afar, and then it cost me years of ardent labour before I could set foot upon its steps. Therefore I look back upon my past with terror. For though I had what must be called a happy childhood, there could be no true joy for me outside Germanism, and I tremble when I think how late I came in touch with the German language and that to learn it was by no means easy. It is my inmost conviction—gained through years of study, gained in those solemn hours when the soul wrestles for knowledge with the Divine, like Jacob with the Angel—that the moral and spiritual salvation of mankind depends upon what we can call German. In that "moral order of the world" of which Your Majesty often spoke at Liebenberg, the German element is now the corner-stone; it is the central pivot. It is the language that convinces us irrefutably of this; for Science, Philosophy and Religion can to-day take no onward step save in the German tongue. And the existence of this tongue teaches us something which we might not learn from the phenomena of daily life: that in the German people the highest capacities are united, more highly than elsewhere. The tongue and the people's soul condition each other reciprocally. Each grows out of the other. Here further growth and blossoming are possible as long as both live and penetrate each other. Among the Latin peoples both are dead; among the other Germans (I am thinking especially of England) cleavage had long since begun, a cleavage in which the language gradually becomes dumb (that is to say a mere medium of intercourse, not an element out of which new forms can

be coined) and consequently the soul loses her wings little by little and only crawls like a worm on its belly. And because the German soul is indissolubly linked with the German tongue, the higher development of mankind is bound up with Germany, a mighty Germany spreading far across the earth the sacred heritage of her language, affirming herself everywhere and imposing herself on others. In my eyes, at least, the positive *Realpolitik* of the German Empire—a policy that cannot be too sober and matter-of-fact—has therefore a significance other than that of the policies of other countries. Viewed from the standpoint of a moral world-order, the Anglo-Saxons have forfeited their inheritance—I am not speaking of to-day but looking forward into the centuries. The Russians are only the newest embodiment of the eternal realm of Tamerlane; if their German Imperial House be taken from them only disintegrating raw material is left. God builds to-day upon the Germans alone. This is the knowledge, the certain truth, that has filled my soul for years; to the service of this truth I have sacrificed my repose; for it I will live and die.”

In his reply the Emperor thanked Chamberlain for “the priceless jewel” he had sent him, and said the Germans needed a liberator like Chamberlain who would give them access to Indo-Aryan sources of knowledge. He went on:—

“You sing the High Song of the German, and, above all, of our glorious tongue, and pregnantly summon the Germans to leave their petty quarrels, to take up the task of being God’s instrument for the spreading of His *Kultur*, of His teachings, and therefore to deepen, to raise up, to cherish their language and through it Science, Enlightenment and Faith! This was redemption. . . .

And now I invoke God’s blessing and our Saviour’s strengthening upon my comrade and ally in the fight for Germans against Rome, Jerusalem, etc., in the New Year 1902. The feeling that one strives for an absolutely good, Divine cause holds the pledge of victory! You swing your pen, I my tongue. I grasp my guardsman’s blade and say, despite all attacks and carpings: I stand my ground!”

In February 1903 Chamberlain wrote the Emperor what he called a “birthday letter,” which fills 21 printed pages, upon his love for Germany, the faults of Englishmen and Americans and the mission of kings. He suggested that the finest title which had ever adorned a monarch might be “William the German.” The Emperor answered promptly, calling Chamberlain a “saviour in the hour of need,” whose letter had come to him in the midst of “birth pangs” which had accompanied the writing of some lines of recognition upon the work of Professor Delitzsch, “Bible and Babel.” The Emperor added that, after reading Chamberlain’s letter, he had brought forth his literary child in four hours; and went on: “I shall allow myself to lay

my child also at your feet—you who are my spiritual midwife. In so doing I must ask your forgiveness if, in reading it, you should hear tones that seem familiar to you ! ”

So the correspondence went on up to and during the Great War, when Chamberlain wrote “ spiritual bombs ” against England, took German nationality and was created a Knight of the Iron Cross. Even after the War the correspondence continued up to 1923. It contained the ex-Kaiser’s confession of faith, which included the statement : “ In my opinion Christ was by descent a Galilean, therefore no Jew,” and ended with the lines, “ This conception can extinguish all religious strife and put an end to all differences of creed. Upon it a union of all Christian Churches can be built up. Our Church must become German, Germanic ! ”

But by the autumn of 1923 Chamberlain had transferred his allegiance from the ex-Kaiser to Adolf Hitler, to whom he wrote on October 7th, 1923, a flattering epistle hailing him as the Saviour of Germany. One passage ran :—

“ You have mighty things to do ; but in spite of your will-power I do not take you for a violent man. You know Goethe’s distinction between violence and violence. There is a violence that comes out of and leads back to chaos, and there is a violence whose nature it is to form a cosmos. Of this violence Goethe says : ‘ It builds up every form with ruling hand, and even at its greatest it is not violence.’ ”

It is in this cosmos-building sense that I wish to count you among the up-building, not among the violent men.

Ever and again I ask myself whether the lack of political instinct for which the Germans are so generally blamed is not a symptom of a much deeper State-building disposition. German talent for organisation is unsurpassed. And German capacity for science is unequalled. . . . The ideal of politics would be to have no politics. But this non-politics would have to be frankly professed and imposed upon the world by force. Nothing can be done as long as the Parliamentary system rules ; God knows that the Germans have no spark of talent for this system. Its prevalence I regard as the greatest misfortune, for it can only lead again and again into a morass and bring to nought all plans for restoring the Fatherland to health and lifting it up. . . .

My faith in Germanism has not wavered an instant, though my hope—I confess it—was at a low ebb. With one stroke you have transformed the state of my soul. That in the hour of her deepest need Germany gives birth to a Hitler proves her vitality ; as do the influences that emanate from him ; for these two things—personality and its influence—belong together . . . May God protect you ! ”

Like William II, Hitler had taken his “ Aryan ” Nordic ideas mainly from Chamberlain’s *Foundations of the Nineteenth Century*.

His Germanic anti-Semitism came partly from the same source and partly from the Austrian pan-German leaders, Schoenerer and Wolf, with a dash of Lueger's Christian Social anti-Semitism thrown in. The excitement and bitterness which Schoenerer's anti-Semitic pan-Germanism and Lueger's Christian anti-Semitism brought into Austrian political life can hardly be conceived by those who never experienced it. Hitler's own biography *Mein Kampf* makes it clear that he is a product of this atmosphere of intense strife; and after he had gone from Vienna to Munich in 1912 he may well have read—as I read in Vienna—a book entitled *If I were Kaiser* that appeared in 1913. It ran through a dozen editions in a few weeks. It proposed the expulsion from Germany of all Jews not possessing German citizenship; the degradation to the position of tolerated aliens of all Jews, whether of pure or of mixed blood, who possessed citizenship and were registered as Jews in 1870; the exclusion of Jews, baptised and unbaptised, from all public offices, from service in the Army and Navy, from the Bar, from the franchise and from eligibility to Parliament, from the directorship of banks and theatres, from the ownership of newspapers and from journalism in general. The Jews should also, this writer urged, be deprived of the right to own land, or to lend money on landed mortgages, and should be required, as aliens, to pay double taxation. It is a question, he added, of "saving the German soul."

At all events, it is upon these lines that Hitler has acted against the Jews in Germany, and is now acting in Austria; and it is significant that in the recent proposals of Herr Henlein, Hitler's lieutenant in Czechoslovakia, the introduction of the notorious "Aryan Paragraph" should be demanded. One is tempted to wonder whether this demand is among those which the British and French Ministers at Prague lately urged the Czechoslovak Government to accept by way of going to the utmost limit in the effort to remove Henlein's and Hitler's "grievances"! For it must be clearly understood that German aims, in Czechoslovakia and elsewhere, are all of one piece. Fichte's primeval people, or *Urvolk*, speaking the primeval tongue, or *Ursprache*, through which it maintains contact with and draws strength from the forces of Nature, cannot allow the expansion of its God-given *Kultur* to be hindered by the machinations of inferior races who do not even recognise Christ as a German!

If, among those inferior races, the British hold a place much lower than that of the German angels, they are not so vile as are

the French and the Slavs at whose expense Hitler's ideal of building up a German nation of 250 millions in Europe, with adequate "*Lebensraum*," or living space, is to be realised. In this respect Hitler expresses the views of the "geo-political" school to which his deputy, Herr Hess, belongs and of which the present chief is General von Haushofer. It is the lineal descendant of the school of pan-German thought which Friedrich Ratzel, with his doctrine of "anthropo-geographical predestination," and Arthur Dix, with his "geographical predestination," founded in the nineteenth century under the influence of Fichte and Hegel. Our amiable friend, Professor Banse, who gloats over the invasion and subjugation of England, is one, but only one, of the exponents of these ideas. His book *Raum und Volk im Weltkrieg* (1932) ¹ will repay careful study, not because it is an isolated product of "political geography," but because it is typical. It is enlightening to compare Banse's definition of "the proper territory of a true Third Reich," having a present population of 92 millions, with the pan-German map of 1899:—

(a) Purely German States : the German Empire ; Austria ; Danzig ; Luxemburg ; Holland and her East-Indian colonies ; Liechtenstein.

(b) The German portions of other countries : German Belgium (Flanders, Brabant, Eupen, Malmedy) ; German Switzerland ; German France (Flanders, Alsace and Lorraine) ; German Italy (especially the Southern Tyrol) ; German Yugoslavia (Southern Styria) ; German Czechoslovakia (Bohemia, Moravia, Silesia) ; German Poland (West Prussia, Posen, Upper Silesia) ; German Lithuania (the Memel territory) ; German Denmark.

This was written in 1933. If we compare it further with some well-known passages in the second volume of Hitler's *Mein Kampf* (which was written in 1927, two years after Locarno, with the help of various "geo-political" advisers), we may see how consistent is this line of German thought. From it Hitler has never departed save in so far as he has extended it by demanding the return to Germany of her former oversea colonies and has restricted it, more recently, by renouncing—perhaps conditionally—the Southern Tyrol.

On page 757 of *Mein Kampf* he writes:—

"The future orientation of our foreign policy must be neither to the West nor to the East, but an eastern policy in the sense of gaining

¹ The English version is entitled *Germany Prepares for War*.

the necessary soil for our German people. Since, for this, one needs strength, and France, the mortal enemy of our people, strangles us pitilessly and robs us of power, we must take upon ourselves every sacrifice of which the effects are calculated to contribute to a destruction of French endeavours to hold mastery in Europe. Any and every power is to-day our natural ally who, like us, feels the French lust of domination on the continent to be intolerable. No approach to such a power must seem to us too hard and no renunciation unspeakable, if its final result offers even the possibility of crushing our grimmest hater. The healing of smaller wounds we can then leave to the softening influences of time if we can cauterise and heal up the biggest wounds."

And again, on pages 766 and 767 :—

" Only when this has been completely understood in Germany, so that the will to live of the German nation no longer decays in merely passive defence but pulls itself together for an active final settlement with France and throws itself, with the greatest ultimate aims on the German side, into a last decisive struggle—only then will one be able to bring the eternal and, in itself, so barren contest between us and France to an end ; though then only on the assumption that Germany will really see in the annihilation of France merely a means, not an end, so that thereafter our people will at last be able to attain its possible expansion in another quarter. To-day we number 80 million Germans in Europe ! And our foreign policy will be recognised as right only when, in hardly a century, 250 million Germans will live upon this continent, not crammed together as factory coolies but as peasants and workmen whose labour will reciprocally vouchsafe life to each other."

Let us note the words that no renunciation is unspeakable and no approach too hard to any power that will help Germany to crush France as a means of the expansion of German territory elsewhere. Recently we heard Hitler declare the Alpine frontier of Italy inviolable and announce the abandonment of the Germans in the Italian Tyrol as his " political testament " to the German people—perhaps as a means of keeping his hold on Italy in view of the final struggle with France. This " approach " to Italy must have been the harder for him in view of the passionate pages on which he denounces, in *Mein Kampf*, all those Germans who " betrayed " Southern Tyrol to the Italians. Perhaps, too, he may have thought that when the " major wound " of France shall have been cauterised, or, to use Hitler's own expression, " burnt out," the minor wound may yield to healing treatment. In any event, he himself has taught us what his chief aims are.

And we, in this country, can fall into no greater error than

to think these aims a peculiar and perhaps evanescent outcome of Nazi "blood and soil," "blood and race," "folkish" ideology. They run with remarkable consistency through the whole of German political philosophy since Herder—who was a contemporary of Frederick the Great—and especially since Fichte. From Fichte to Hitler the line is straight. It led to the Great War, which Germany waged for the mastery of Europe and, indeed, of the world; and it is a line that will again lead to war if the direction in which it runs be not understood, and blocked, in time. War is the natural agency of those who follow it, however ready they may be to reap preliminary advantages by threat of war without actual fighting. We must not forget that Hegel defined war as "eternal and moral," or that Fichte declared, in his "Doctrine of State," that "between States there is neither law nor right unless it be the right of the strongest," and added that "the people metaphysically predestined has the moral right to fulfil its destiny by every means of cunning and force."

We are in the presence of a body of teaching to which Hitler has succeeded in giving the quality of a quasi-religious frenzy, a crusading intensity under the sign of a hooked cross which the Pope denounced the other day as having no place in Christendom. Behind it lies the dynamic and explosive concept of *Kultur*, a concept which no German has yet succeeded in defining comprehensively, despite many efforts. As I have said, it has nothing in common with our concepts of "culture" or "civilisation." The nearest approach to a satisfactory definition was given two years ago by the leading Germanist of Paris University, Professor Vermeil, who explained it by drawing attention to the external conditions which have affected German thought, in so far as that thought has dwelt upon the destiny of the German nation. The soil of Germany, he said, comprises the northern plain which is without natural limits on the east and west, and the southern highlands which give access to the south-west towards the Rhine and to the south-east along the Danube. The northern plain is not naturally fertile. It is rather a region of passage than a fixed abode for its population. Across it Germany, who is far from being an ethnical unit, felt the thrust of the northern tribes which plunged like a wedge between the Celtic or Latin masses on the west and the Slavs on the east. If the western border stabilised itself little by little, the eternal contest between Germans and Slavs fretted out, in flat country on the east, a zigzag frontier which is, so to speak, pregnant with perpetual conflict. To the south the Italians and the Magyars mount guard against German

expansiveness and oppose to it barriers apparently insuperable. In order to triumph, German expansion needs to overcome all these barriers so as to escape from territorial limitations and to gain greater relative unity. Professor Vermeil continued :—

“ This explains the meaning which German thought gives to *Kultur*. Here, *Kultur* means mastery, effort ceaselessly renewed, constant struggle without final satisfaction in principle. By “ civilisation ” the West understands the sum total of the institutions which came at once out of Antiquity and Christianity, the acknowledged sources of Western thought and of Western universalism. But Germany only learned late, and indirectly, the thought of Antiquity. Nor was she so strongly impregnated by Christianity as were the other peoples of Western and Southern Europe; and, perhaps for this reason, she has preserved her original traits. It is, above all, this double tardiness which leads her to set up the concept of *Kultur* against the concept of ‘ civilisation ’ and, not without disdain, to throw back the latter concept on to the West.”

Are not we, whose fate is bound up with “ the West ”; we whose institutions are based upon an ideal of individual human freedom; who hold liberty of thought, speech and action to be our greatest political good—are we not compelled to reflect upon the dimensions of the contest which may be forced upon us? We may be living on the eve of one of the decisive moments in human history. Either our forefathers, who strove and fought for freedom, were wrong or the Germans are right. We look upon civilisation as a system of ideas, aspirations and ways of behaviour which are humane and susceptible of becoming universal, as an approach to a rich and solid order of things wherein mankind may dwell. The Germans, on the contrary, understand by *Kultur* an intimate union between themselves and the natural forces of the Universe whose action they alone intuitively apprehend, and a human discipline designed to utilise those forces. This is why Germans feel that they are closer than other peoples to the primitive world, and return to it more easily as to the fount of their own genius.

Hence the remarkable consistency of German ideas and aims since Fichte assured his fellow-countrymen that they are the original human stock speaking an original tongue which gives them access to the forces of nature and makes of them “ The People ” who are entitled to rule the earth. And it was to this fundamental divergence between the aims of the West and the aims of German *Kultur* that the wisest statesman of modern Europe, the late President Masaryk, alluded when he adjured

his own people to make "Jesus, not Cæsar" their exemplar and to choose the ideal of humaneness rather than the ideal of domination.

Summary of Discussion.

DR. GOOCH said that, like the lecturer, he had given over half his life to the study of German history and ideas. He agreed with the lecturer's underlying assumption that the Germans were a very great and a very formidable race who might be liked or disliked but could never be ignored. The historical importance of Frederick the Great had been rightly emphasised. He had put Prussia "on the map." Lord Rosebery had called him the patron saint of Germany. The lecturer had rightly pointed out that the governing principle of the whole of the forty-six years of the reign of Frederick the Great had been *raison d'état*. The man who had begun with the rape of Silesia and followed this up by the partition of Poland stood as a very master of the Macchiavellian art. There had seemed to be, however, a slight suggestion in the address that this principle of *raison d'état*, if not confined to Prussia, was at any rate more effectively and intensively practised there. That there was something almost uniquely realistic and ruthless in the long tradition of Frederician and post-Frederician diplomacy was a matter of fact. But *raison d'état* had been the religion of statesmen since the coming of the modern State round about 1500, and ruthless and realistic as Frederick the Great had been, he had been no more so than Richelieu, who as a Cardinal of the Roman Church had supported the Protestant cause in the Thirty Years' War. Cavour had said: "What rascals we should be if we did for ourselves what we do for our country's sake."

There was one consideration of governing significance when an attempt was being made to understand the mentality of the men who had made Prussia and through Prussia Germany, namely that, unlike Great Britain, France, Spain, Italy, all of whom in different degrees had had the inestimable blessing of what the French called natural frontiers, Germany had had nothing of the sort. If they were ever to form a nation State, which had not occurred until 1870, this could only come into existence and remain in existence on the basis of a very strong and rigid and centralised rule. Although the speaker detested the Potsdam spirit, without it there would have been no modern Prussia, no modern Germany, and although those who were not citizens of that country might consider that this would indeed have been a mercy, they should remember when trying to understand the German mentality that to the Germans the matter did not look the same.

The lecturer had been right in emphasising not the novelty but the relative antiquity not only of the racial superiority complex but also of the pan-German doctrine. There was, however, a very great difference between the ideology of dreamers and writers from Fichte onwards to Chamberlain and the official acceptance and application of such doctrines by the people in power. The first ruler of Germany ever to

defend pan-Germanism was Hitler. Pan-Germanism had been contained in books and in the press, and had been voiced on platforms, but there had never been a pan-German at the helm before to-day.

The speaker had been a little surprised not to hear more about Bismarck. He had been ruthless and realistic, and had never pretended to be anything else; but it would be impossible really to understand his greatness unless it were realised that this great man of war, after he had reached his goal, became and remained a great man of peace. When he had got what he wanted he had stopped. He had preached and practised the doctrine of limited liability, thereby showing that he was great in victory and accomplishment as well as great in endeavour and aspiration. The Kaiser had never been a pan-German. What made Hitler so much more dangerous than anybody who had ever had German power concentrated in their hands—and power was in his hands to-day to a greater extent than it had been in the hands of Frederick the Great, who, though also head of the State, the Government and the Army, had been the ruler of only six million Germans, whereas Hitler was the ruler of seventy-three millions—was that he was the first man on the German throne really to believe in pan-Germanism with all the fanatical intensity of one whose sincerity was not doubted even by his greatest opponent.

PROFESSOR TOYNBEE said that the lecturer had brilliantly proved that the Germans were the silliest nation in Europe, but to be silly was not to differ from any of the other nations. The last speaker had pointed out that *raison d'état* had by no means been invented by Frederick the Great, and surely the present nationalism in Germany was neither peculiar to the Germans nor their invention. Probably the English and the French had had a great deal more to do with it than the Germans, and, as the lecturer had pointed out, an Englishman had invented the particularly pernicious form of racial nationalism from which they were now suffering. Germany was rather like the type of convex mirror which distorted the features and showed the caricaturist how to get to work. For instance, there were discreet English and American expressions for some of the very foolish German thoughts mentioned during the address. "Geopolitical predestination" had been called by the Americans "the manifest destiny" of the American people to be the master nation of the whole of the New World, and "Aryan superiority" was called "the white man's burden" by the English.

The last speaker had pointed out the comforting fact that there had been famous German statesmen in modern history who had had limited aims. Frederick's aims had been limited. He had been determined to raise his State to the position of a great Power, but there he had stopped. More than a hundred years lay between the end of the Seven Years' War and the beginning of the first of Bismarck's wars. And Bismarck's aims, too, had certainly been limited. Bismarck's greatness had consisted in his knowing exactly what he wanted, in

getting it and then in stopping instead of trying to grasp more. During about two-thirds of his political career he had simply been defending what he had previously conquered. His aim had been to unite with Prussia the mosaic of small States in the south and south-west of Germany which had been left by the peace settlement of 1815, and thereby to create a limited German national State. So moderate had been his aims that he had deliberately left out Austria, not wishing to attempt the task of breaking up another great Power. Down to 1870, if anyone had been asked which was the really ambitious national State constituting a threat to the liberties of Europe, they would have mentioned, not the Prussians, but the French. The speaker possessed a map published by an English newspaper at the time of the Franco-Prussian War, on which the anticipated war area had been printed in red and the rest in black; and this red patch covered, not the French territory on which the fighting afterwards took place, but the Prussian Rhineland and the Bavarian Palatinate, because it had been assumed that France would fight her war on German soil as she had done in the past almost invariably for two centuries. It had never been thought that the French would give up the idea of domination; and yet, to do them justice, they had given it up after 1870. Therefore it was not impossible that the Germans in their turn, might give up their dreams of world conquest.

Finally, what had given Bismarck his chance had been a geographical vacuum created by the previous general peace settlement. Between 1815 and the eighteen-sixties the great vacuum in Europe had been in Western Germany and in Italy. To-day the vacuum had shifted eastwards, and it now lay between Germany on the one side and Russia on the other. This vacuum did give Hitler, on a much larger scale, the sort of opportunity which Bismarck had had in the middle of the last century. The danger was that if Germany did expand into the vacuum, as Bismarck had done on a smaller scale, then, after this second expansion into Central and Eastern Europe, she would be a Power vastly greater than any other single Power in Europe and would be equal to at least two of the largest Powers together. This would completely upset the balance of power in Europe, and would upset it at a time when the world was most desperately in need of order through some kind of unification, and had apparently made a failure of the attempt to get this through the League of Nations by agreement between sovereign States. This had created a formidable political vacuum to match the geographical vacuum in Eastern Europe. The need for unification was so desperate that Hitler's antique plan of unifying the world by force had a chance of fulfilling, in a very crude way, the present crying need of the world. If the unification of the world could not be brought about by agreement, Hitler would have a very good chance of realising it through force.

COLONEL G. F. B. TURNER said that he had followed with complete agreement the lecturer's address. He was not anti-German or pro-

French but pro-British. From January 1920 to December 1925 he had been a member of the Military Inter-Ally Commission of Control in East Prussia and during the six years he had spent in Königsberg had had many opportunities of studying the mentality of the German people. As the lecturer had indicated there had been no change in their mentality for the last two hundred years. It was very necessary that that mentality should be understood. The speaker was appalled by the pro-German feeling in Great Britain due to lack of understanding. People were ready to make excuses for German breaches of the Peace Treaties, German rearmament, etc., and recently the London Press had been flooded with appreciations of what was, in the speaker's opinion, a most dangerous book written by a servant of the Government, Major-General Temperley, who for ten years had been Military Adviser at Geneva. In this book General Temperley, after saying that he had done all in his power to suppress the production of the French Secret Dossier, had then thrown on the French the whole blame for the failure of the Disarmament Conference and the subsequent rearmament of Germany. The Secret Dossier was a statement compiled by the French giving instances of the German breaches of the Peace Treaty and was, in General Temperley's own words, "undoubtedly a very complete indictment of German good faith."

In 1923 the speaker when revising and bringing up to date the report of the Commission in East Prussia had come across a passage written by his predecessor which he transcribed, and which stated that "the greatest difficulty which the Commission had had to face had been the obstinacy and bad faith of the East Prussian coupled with the fact that apparently all German officers were prepared to tell deliberate untruths for the good of the Fatherland." This statement was thoroughly justified. The fatal mistake made by the British Government throughout had been in placing any reliance on the word of Germany. He agreed with General Temperley that if the Germans could not be trusted it made negotiations very difficult if not impossible, but the fact was that the Germans could *not* be trusted. Hitler would keep his word until it suited him to break it. The French knew this and acted accordingly. We knew it, but pretended otherwise.

In February 1925 the speaker had been one of three thousand people listening to Dr. Eckener's description of his first flight to America. The thunderous applause which had greeted statements by subsequent speakers that Germany's future was in the air; that it was in and through the air that she was going to win back all that she had lost; and that it was the duty of everyone in Germany to make himself or herself air-minded, had orientated his thoughts in a direction he had never had reason to alter. What was the meaning of British endeavours to strengthen her Air Force, her Air Raid Precautions and the strengthening of her defences generally? Was she afraid of attack from Switzerland, Denmark, Holland, Belgium or France or even Italy? His audience knew perfectly well that there was only one country which could contemplate with any prospect of success an

attack on Great Britain, and that was the country which was trying to lull us into a state of complacency. Bismarck had said that there was no country so easy to deceive as England. Lord Roberts had said thirty years ago that Germany would strike when Germany's hour had struck. Germany could not be trusted. When she had consolidated her position in Central Europe and started to press her claim to the colonies we should stand fast and make no concessions of any sort. For that way would lie our ruin.

MR. RENNIE SMITH said that the lecture was the fifth in a series which had a particular bearing on British foreign policy.¹ It could be linked up with the first lecture of the series. It had been a lecture of fact-finding. The first of the series had been in part historical, but mainly concerned with the contemporary European map and some anticipation of the future. In the fact-finding of the present address was a deep underpinning with regard to the character of contemporary Germany from history. After devoting four and a half years exclusively to the study of the character of the new Germany and trying to provide a documentation which might be of some small service in the education of the British nation, the speaker had a deep sense of how necessary it was for Great Britain to make up her mind in the light of the facts as to the real situation. What was the nature of the problem? There was nothing in the present conduct of foreign affairs to show that the Government were even grounded on the matter.

The statement by Dr. Gooch concerning Bismarck and the Emperor did not undermine any of the substance of the lecturer's address. If Bismarck had not been a pan-German it had been for reasons of statesmanship. He had been quiet from 1878 until 1890 for reasons of satiation, but had then given a lead for an overseas empire. If the Kaiser had not been a pan-German he had been surrounded by and saturated with immensely powerful forces working for pan-Germanism.

It was necessary to realise in view of the facts presented by the lecturer that the aspirations and the psychological position of the Germans had not been born or created with the coming of Adolf Hitler. If this could be agreed upon, the audience, as a microcosm of the nation, would have made an immense step forward. The British Cabinet was deeply divided, so was the Government and so was the nation, because they were not agreed with regard to the facts, and for this reason the speaker wished to express his admiration and gratitude to the lecturer for the factualness of his address.

MR. W. J. ROSE recalled Burke's famous statement: "You cannot bring an indictment against a whole nation." He had been a student in Leipzig at the time when the notorious pan-German historian, Lamprecht was teaching. But there had been another historian,

¹ See the paper on "The Issues in British Foreign Policy" published in the May-June 1938 number of the *Journal*.

Brandenburg, who had hated Lamprecht and all his works. The tragedy of the present situation was that the power which had passed into Hitler's hands was so great that all those more liberal lines through German thought were unable to make themselves felt.

The speaker did not think it was quite true to say that Bismarck had stopped his aggression in 1871. In his war on the Catholic Church he had tried to do what Hitler had now taken on and what, through the conditions prevailing to-day, he looked as if he might carry through. Bismarck had failed. In the 'sixties he had achieved everything which he had set out to do. In the 'seventies and 'eighties, however, he had failed in almost everything which he had set out to do. Two and a half million Polish Catholics in Pomerania and Poznanian had been a sort of nightmare to him from 1863 onwards. Bismarck had never got over his fear of the Poles in Prussia as the spearhead of another faith, viz. of Catholicism. Perhaps fear of this sort was unjustified, but one saw something very like it in the Nazi campaign against the Church to-day.

MISS NESTI SANDERS said that she entirely agreed with the lecturer's address. The other day a German had been speaking on German aims in Europe. Apparently, according to the agreement made with Mussolini in Rome, Hitler was to have a free hand right down the Danube Basin to the Black Sea which would mean his taking the Roumanian oil-fields and then the Ukraine, the granary of Europe. This would give Germany a complete hegemony in Europe and she would probably extend her power to Asia. In such a case the other European nations would be in such an inferior position that life would be unbearable.

MR. GATHORNE-HARDY (in the Chair) said that the historical aspect of the lecture was of great importance because there were two schools of thought in Great Britain on the subject of Germany. One attributed the rise of Hitler and his present attitude to the Peace Treaties and considered that when these grievances were settled Germany would be perfectly amenable. The other school of thought, in the words of a recent book by Mr. F. A. Voigt,¹ considered that only the shallowest understanding would see the National Socialist Revolution as a result of Versailles. It was the nightmare of German genius come true in which Versailles had been but an incident, the War but an episode. The historical survey given by the lecturer would agree with the second thesis.

MR. WICKHAM STEED, in reply to the first speaker, said he had been trying to explain the consistency of German aims throughout a certain period; naturally, it had been impossible to give a complete analysis of German history in the time. He had not wished to imply that the Germans alone practised the *raison d'état*. Most other States had

¹ *Unto Caesar*, by F. A. Voigt. (London, 1938.)

practised it, but there was not another people who had produced philosophers of the first rank, of the eminence of Fichte and Hegel, who had provided philosophical justification for the *raison d'état* and taught it to their peoples.

The lecturer agreed with the fifth speaker that there was another Germany. The whole tragedy of Germany had been that the Liberal feeling which had started the movement for German unity which led up to the Parliament of Frankfurt, had been fruitless until it had been translated into blood and iron by Bismarck with the enthusiastic support of the German people. Therefore when speaking of Germany it was necessary to consider the effective tendencies which dominated the State. Bismarck had not been a pan-German in the ordinary sense of the word. He had not joined the Austrian pan-Germans for the reason that he needed Austria-Hungary as an ally. When Austria-Hungary had begun to break up it had been another matter. Bismarck had not always been consistent. He had opposed Liberalism and Parliamentary ideas as long as he was Chancellor. But after his fall in 1890 the lecturer had heard him speak in impassioned tones of the necessity for parliamentary means of curbing the power of the Crown. Concerning William II, the lecturer advised the audience to get the volume of correspondence between William II and Houston Chamberlain, where they would see the approval and affirmation by the former of the latter's pan-German fanaticism. It was, however, true that one could not bring an indictment against a whole people. The lecturer believed that to-day, in spite of the *Anschluss*, more than half the German people were opposed to Hitler, but they dared not and could not say one word. Great Britain would help that better part of the German people by refusing resolutely to be bamboozled or hoodwinked by Hitler, and by upholding the principles which were the very foundations of Great Britain and the British Commonwealth of Nations. It was true that many eminent people, Germans among them, had severely criticised the doctrines of Fichte and Hegel; but it should be remembered that these were the doctrines and the policy of the present German Government, and they were in the hands of the man who, the first speaker had rightly said, held more power than any German since Frederick the Great. The lecturer considered the situation really dangerous. He did not yet consider it hopeless, but it would become so unless the British people tried to ally their own minds with the truth, historical and philosophical, about Germany and her aims, and refused to be misled by propaganda of any kind. Great Britain was to-day almost the only active warden and trustee of the future of Western civilisation.